

Souls for Christ Ministries Presents: New Believer's Lessons

Lesson #14 Learning to Pray

In this lesson you will learn:

- What the road to prayer is
- How to practice the presence of God
- What being in the presence of God brings us

What is prayer? What does it do for us and why does God insist on asking us to pray?

Prayer is simple one on one communication with God in Heaven and is a means of intimacy with him. Prayer brings direction, discernment, and often times the peace that passes understanding. **Philippians 4:7** says: *"And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."*

What is the Lord's Prayer? It is a prayer Jesus taught his Disciples to pray.

Read the Lord's prayer in **Matthew 6:9-13**

Why did Jesus, Son of God consider it important to pray?

1. Even though he was God's Son he still needed the valuable communication and strength God provided when he prayed. Read: **Luke 6:12** and **Mark 1:35**
2. He was totally dependent on the Father for his connection and power to overcome.
Read: **Matthew 26:41**
3. Jesus knew that prayer was a two-way journey and he often he went to a solitary place to wait on God.
Isaiah 40:31 says: *"but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not be faint."*

The Road to Prayer

Many of us struggle to pray. But learning good methodology helps us develop healthy prayer lives. One good way to learn prayer is by following **the A.C.T.S road**, an acronym for the words **Adoration**, **Confession**, **Thanksgiving**, and **Supplication**.



"A" stands for **Adoration**

We must learn to sing praise to God during our daily interactions with him which ushers us into his presence. It is vital that we sing to the Lord with our all hearts, demonstrating our love and devotion.

Revelation 7:9, and 14:7 says *"all heaven and earth worshipped God together."*

When we adore him it sets the tone for our private time with him and it gives us a place to start in prayer.

Adoring him reminds us of who we are and whom we are worshipping.

Read: **Revelation 4:1-11**

Prayer brings us directly into the "Holy of Holies" and it opens us up so everything is laid bare before the one we are worshipping.

God is worthy of our praise and demands His creation to worship Him (the Creator) for that is why we were created.

Revelation 5:13 says: *"Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing: "To him who sits on the throne and the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!"*

"C" stands for **Confession**

Confession is another necessary discipline in the Christian life. It is simply agreeing with God that our sin needs to be confessed. Regular confession keeps our hearts clean and free from unconfessed sin and open to the prompting of the Holy Spirit.

When we came to Christ, we confessed all our sin to receive salvation, but daily confession keeps us moving forward with a pure heart before God.

Confession brings a cleansed conscience. Confession is not repentance. Confession is part of repentance. In confession you are listening, admitting and agreeing with God that sin separates us from Him. Read: **Isaiah 59:2** and **Romans 3:23**

Confession brings freedom. There will be a new openness to pray. In the end we can be confident that when we pray God will hear and willingly answer.

It helps us to get in a routine of quickly ridding our lives of unforgiveness that builds up. Confession teaches us intimacy with God. The ultimate goal of intimacy with God is learning how to spend time in his presence and learning to listen as he speaks to us.

"T" stands for **Thanksgiving**

Read: **Psalms 103:2** and **I Thessalonians 5:18**

As Christians we must get into a daily habit of thanking God for everything He gives us. We may be grateful to God and may not be truly thankful. There is a vast difference between the two. You can be grateful but without expressing it properly we lack true thankfulness. We must express our love and thankfulness to God for all he has done.

Thanksgiving helps express love to God for all the blessings and answered prayer.

"S" stands for **Supplication** and Petitions (requests)

Supplications or petitions are the actual requests we make to God on behalf of others.

Philippians 4:6 says: *"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God."*

This is our opportunity to go to God with the needs of others, and to ask him with confidence. Remember nothing is too small or too big for God to handle. Read: **I Peter 5:7**.

If you struggle to categorize your requests simply make a list and refer to it regularly. No request is beyond God's ability to answer. Read: **Ephesians 3:20**

How to Pray in God's Presence

- ✓ Pray aloud, it creates more of an environment to believe.
- ✓ Write out your requests so you don't have to remember all of them.
- ✓ Practice makes perfect, just keep doing it and you will grow.

A good piece of advice is to attend all the prayer meetings you can and learn from others. It is vital as you follow Christ.

Reviewing what you have learned so far:

1. Did you learn from these principles about the road to prayer? Yes or No?
2. If yes, what can you put into practice that will help you in your personal prayer life?
3. How often do you totally get alone with God and practice waiting to hear him speak without speaking? **Psalm 46:10a** says: *"Be still, and know that I am God.."*

Remember! Prayer is our lifeline to God in heaven. If we do all the talking how can we be listening to hear his voice?

Practicing the Presence

What does it mean to pray in God's presence?

Looking at God's Presence in the Old and New Testament

In the Old Testament in **Exodus 13:21** it states that God's people knew they were in his presence by two signs:

- ✚ The pillar of cloud by day
- ✚ The pillar of fire by night

When Israel feared their enemies in the desert, God's presence would always assure them.

In the New Testament God's presence was forecasted through the prophets who told foretold Christ would come. He is Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Prince of Peace in **Isaiah 9:6-7**

- ✚ Emmanuel means "God with us". **John 1:14a** says: *"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us..."*
- ✚ Coming into God's presence can be a life changing experience when we let it change us. **Acts 4:13** tells us that ordinary people displayed miraculous wisdom after an encounter with God.
- ✚ On the day of Pentecost God sent the Holy Spirit to Abide with us forever. Read: **Acts 1:8** and **John 14:25**

Why Do We Struggle to Find His Presence?

1. Prayerlessness We don't spend time praying and practicing his presence. Read: **James 4:2**
2. Unconfessed Sin Sin, no matter how insignificant separates us from God. Read: **Isaiah 59:2**
3. Unresolved Relational Conflict Improper relationships with God and others damage our ability to enter into God's presence and prevent us from getting close to God.
4. Selfishness Refusing to give God his rightful place in our lives can damage our intimacy with God. Read: **Luke 9:23**
5. Uncaring Attitudes Our actions and reactions determine our closeness with God. Read: **Philippians 2:5** and **Ephesians 4:23**
6. Inadequate Faith Do we believe God is able to do what he says he can? Read: **Hebrews 11:2**

In God's presence all our thoughts emotions and feelings will be transformed and our sins will be exposed and laid bare before him.

Christian author Bill Hybels said this:

"Power comes out of the stillness, strength comes out of the solitude, while decisions that change the entire course of your life come out of the Holy of Holies..."

Remember! The secret to our success as a Christian is waiting on God in prayer. All our resources and strength and power come from him.

Read: **1 Samuel 26:23** and **Hebrews 11:6** and **1 Corinthians 3:8**

What practicing the presence of God brings:

- Spiritual intimacy and fellowship. We may need comfort in a painful moment God will bring the comfort we need.
- Supernatural confidence. Without it, often there is no continued obedience.
- An increased compassion to win others to Christ.
- The feeling that we are loved by God.

Simply rushing into God's presence with a bucket list of requests and leaving is not prayer.

Developing intimate times of prayer is important. But we must not put a limit on how much time it takes. Coming into God's very presence can be started many ways.

Here are some promises from God's word to claim during your prayer times.

Psalms 50:15 God's promise of deliverance

Job 22:27 God promises peace

Proverbs 16:3 Committing our ways to God brings sure success

Matthew 7:7-8 The promise of Salvation in Jesus the Messiah

Ephesians 6:18 God promises that obedience profits us

1 Thessalonians 5:17 God promises prayer will help us find his will

James 5:16 God's promise of deliverance in our times of need

Questions for you about this lesson Please look up the following verses in your Bible

1. Why do we need to practice prayer? Read: **Revelation 4:1-11** and **Philippians 4:6**
2. What does the acronym A.C.T.S mean in this lesson?
3. How do we come into Gods presence? Read: **Psalm 103:2** and **I Thessalonians 5:18**
4. Why do we struggle to pray? Read: **Hebrews 11:1**
5. What is the definition of Prayer?
6. What is the Lords Prayer? Read: **Mathew 6:9-13**

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